A Certain Academy Index

Note: This is a non-canon parody SS written by Kamachi Kazuma around the time of Volume 6 of the main series.

Academy City was an esper development institution created out of western Tokyo. The city's population was approximately 2.3 million. Most of those were espers who had awakened to some sort of power and the city was overflowing with futuristic items such as wind turbines and automatic cleaning robots.

In one corner of that strange city was a relatively inconspicuous student dormitory.

In one room of that building, a normal high school boy named Kamijou Touma was awakened by a flying body attack.

"Gbhhh!? Gbhgbhogbah!!"

"Good morning, says Misaka as a morning greeting as she sits on your stomach."

He heard an emotionless voice.

He saw shoulder-length brown hair, small facial features, a white short-sleeved blouse, a beige summer sweater, and a gray pleated skirt. This girl closely resembled a girl he knew, but something was not quite right. This girl with large night vision goggles on her forehead was known as Misaka Imouto. She had the same characteristics as a certain girl down to the genetic level and he desperately tried to recall her serial number using his mind which was woozy with pain.

(Was it #10031…no, 32? Or was it 35? I don't think it got up to 40. Oh, right. It was #10032.)

“Wh-why are you sitting on my stomach, Misaka Imouto? I wasn’t hoping for a surprising entrance from you.”

“Betraying your hopes is the entire point, replies Misaka as she rocks back and forth on top of you.”

“U-uhh… M-Misaka Imouto, I thought you were one of the few people I knew who actually had common sense! Also, betraying my expectations is fine, but don’t betray my hopes!”

Kamijou shouted from the bottom of an empty bathtub. His situation had left him unable to sleep in his bed most of the time.

Misaka Imouto tilted her head like a well-oiled machine.

“Oh? But it seems Misaka is a little sister character today, so she must act based on those standards, explains Misaka as she shows no sign of getting off of you.”

“L-little sister?”

“Yes. Those were Misaka’s instructions, so she must act accordingly, says Misaka as she moves the conversation forward and decides staying like this forever would be fine.”

(No, having you sitting on my stomach forever would be a pretty big problem.)

“Wait. I don’t…I don’t understand at all. J-just move out of the way! Nothing good can come of Index seeing us like this!!”

“That white girl is not in this room today, says Misaka as she angrily puts her entire weight on you for bringing up another girl.”

“Gbhaah!! Wait, wait! Were you really this kind of character before!? And what do you mean Index isn’t here?”

“That white girl was given the role of a book manager character rather than a roommate character, so it appears she was sent elsewhere, answers Misaka while puffing out her cheeks. If you want to see her, go somewhere with lots of books, says Misaka as she puts even more weight on you while making angry sound effects.”

“I give! I give, I give, I give!!”

Kamijou struggled beneath the great pressure.

“How about Misaka does something appropriate of a little sister character? suggests Misaka.”

“That’s quite a catastrophic-sounding suggestion. Also, I have to get to school.”

“But we went to the effort of mobilizing all of the Misakas, says Misaka while pointing over there.”

“You’re not listening! Were you really such a forceful character before!? …Wait. All of the Misakas? What do you mean by…wahh!?”

“Misaka is a little sister character, replies Misaka.”

“Misaka is also a little sister character, replies Misaka.”

“Misaka is yet another little sister character, replies Misaka.” “Where should Misaka begin? asks Misaka.” “An early morning event is perfect for a little sister character, answers Misaka.” “What should a little sister character do first?” “Serial Number 10032 already demonstrated it.” “Oh, the flying body press.” “Then, let us go with that, says Misaka.” “Yes, says Mi-” “Yes, says-” “Yes,-” “Ye-”

The bathroom was soon filled with Misakas.

A battered Kamijou walked down the path to school while wondering how he was still alive. The wind turbines were spinning in the morning wind, but it was still quite hot due to the late summer heat. By the time homeroom began, it would turn into a hellish heat.

Misaka Imouto was not with him at present.

The only reason he did not have just under ten thousand identical girls following him was that he had run away. It was possible the Sisters were beginning a search across Academy City.

(Honestly, what was that? Misaka Imouto and the others have broken in a ridiculous way and Index really wasn't in the dorm.)

He did not know what meaning their little sister act held, but he felt there had to be a better way of doing it. As he trembled while recalling almost being crushed to death in the bathroom, he saw Himegami Aisa walking up ahead. She had a very Japanese style with her long straight black hair and shrine maiden outfit, but she also wore a large cross necklace at her chest.

"Oh? Morning, Himegami. We have school today, so why the shrine maiden outfit?"

"These are my normal clothes. I take a morning walk every day," she answered blankly.

Kamijou was worried that she did not have much time left before school started.

She stared off into space while thinking and then finally spoke again.

"I am wearing something other than my usual uniform. Is it a bit moe?"

"…The uniform is a rarer sight with you."

Kamijou's answer caused Himegami's mood to drop like a rock.

"First Misaka Imouto and now her. What's with everyone today?" muttered Kamijou with a tilt of the head.

Himegami recovered after two seconds.

"*Today is that kind of day.*"

"What?"

"Academy City is a bit odd today. The 'school comedy' side is being emphasized. As long as the temporary rules are in effect, people must obey them."

"Rules?"

"Yes. The rules that make up the deepest foundation of common knowledge."

“Um… Why is this happening?”

“There are multiple factors piled on top of each other. For example, the AIM diffusion fields are out of control. Also, someone is carrying out an Ars Magna experiment by reading and reproducing the residual thoughts left in Misawa Cram School. Lastly, the four realms have been shaken by the fall of an angel. And as usual, everything is happening with you in the center.”

“…”

Kamijou listened to Himegami with a grim look.

She had said the “school comedy” side of the city was being emphasized, but he tilted his head as he wondered if that meant what he thought it did. Academy City was indeed a condensed version of every kind of educational facility in the world, but he did not see any need to include that.

At the same time, he had a very bad feeling about what was going to happen due to a ridiculous situation happening behind the scenes.

(Oh, no. I’m not going to make an enemy of an angel and get my ass kicked by Tsuchimikado again, am I?)

A weak smile appeared on his face.

“By the way, your actions will cause a change to the world afterwards.”

“What? I-I’m not sure what you mean.”

“When I say ‘afterwards’, I mean after school today. It seems there will be a letter from a girl in your shoe locker. The instant you read it, this abnormal situation will come to an end. In other words, that will set your route.”

“My route?”

“Many different powers are at work both externally and within, so there is no changing your route once it is set. You are stuck on it until the ending. If you do not carefully manage your flags and parameters, it seems you will end up in tears. Real life has a forced autosave function, so you cannot simply hit the reset button.”

“Flags? Parameters?”

A strange image appeared in Kamijou’s confused head, but he shook his head to erase it. He recognized the terms Himegami was using, but they all reminded him of strange things.

“A letter from a guy does not count. No matter how many letters are placed in your shoe locker before school ends, only one will remain. If no one chooses you and you receive no letter at all, you will live a life free of any troubles.”

“Where did you learn all of this anyway?”

For some reason, Kamijou’s casual question caused Himegami to place her hands on her cheeks.

“I do not know. When I woke up, someone stood by my bed. They were glowing, they had swan-like wings growing from their back, and they had a ring above their head.”

“Probably just a burglar.”

“Yes, I suppose that would be the answer of the one who destroys illusions.”

Himegami gave the smile of a defeated boxer.

“The one who destroys illusions, hm? So what kind of character are you?”

Himegami looked off into empty space for a moment before answering.

“I am the exposition character. I am needed to advance the story.”

“I’m not sure that counts as a unique character type. We already have tons of exposition characters. Index and Komoe-sensei for example.”

However, the girl with the glitter in her eyes was not listening.

After receiving all those mysteries and that foreshadowing, Kamijou somehow made it to school.

Thinking about the letter Himegami had mentioned seemed to have eaten up a lot of time because he arrived at the classroom a bit later than usual. As he entered, Tsukuyomi Komoe, the 135 cm teacher who looked twelve, was just beginning their homeroom class.

Her gaze met Kamijou's as she stood in front of the teacher's desk.

As soon as it did, a strange "poro poro pen♪" sound effect came from above Kamijou's head.

"Eh? What? What was that sound effect!? Was it a change to a parameter or flag? But what kind of flag!? Did I raise it or lower it? Which one!?"

"Are you still half asleep, Kamijou-chan? Stop saying such nonsense and get to your seat."

As she spoke, a spade mark from a playing card floated above Komoe-sensei's head. A bar graph next to it shot upwards.

"What does that even mean!? I could take a guess what parameter was rising with a heart, but a spade!?"

"Please just close the door already," said Komoe-sensei cheerfully.

For some reason, the bar graph above her head began to visibly lower.

"Wait. I think this is an important scene. I can't just skip past it! And this scares me! I don't like not knowing what parameters and flags are changing!!"

"Sigh. Kamijou-chan, if you are still happily dreaming, you can go wash your face in the water fountain."

Komoe-sensei had no intention of dealing with him, so she looked away and began checking the attendance book in her hand.

"Okay, okay. Kamijou-chan was just barely on time. Good morning. I have no particular announcements, so let's have a peaceful day."

Kamijou tilted his head and made his way to his desk while still confused. Himegami entered after him in her summer uniform and made her way to her

desk with a dull look in her eyes.

Kamijou looked around the classroom from his desk. Everyone seemed more restless than usual, so he asked Aogami Pierce about it.

“Ah ha ha. Kami-yan, that’s cause we’ve got a transfer student coming in today.”

“What? A transfer student?”

“Ah ha ha. I *hope to be* a character who casually drops important hints in his casual conversations. Then when you’re in real trouble, my words will flash through your mind and show you the way to survive.”

“Nothing you have said to me has ever been useful like that.”

Despite Kamijou’s exhausted tone of voice, Aogami Pierce did not stop smiling.

Kamijou turned toward Komoe-sensei who had only her head showing above the teacher’s desk.

“Komoe-sensei, who’s the transfer student? Is it Himegami?”

“Kamijou-chan! Why does Himegami-chan have to transfer in twice!? Or was that such a small event that you don’t even remember it!?”

As Kamijou gave a puzzled look, the black-haired girl in the seat diagonally behind him was absorbed by a black aura. When at school, Himegami Aisa removed her shrine maiden outfit and hid her cross inside her sailor uniform, so she became a girl with incredibly few unique features.

“Oh, right. Himegami is the same age as me, isn’t she?”

“Otherwise she would not be part of our class, Kamijou-chan.”

“What an odd sign. Is there any other foreshadowing left?”

“No! All of the mysteries surrounding Himegami-chan have been dealt with! There will be no strange events or rivals in love, so please just relax, Kamijou-chan!”

“Oh. Isn’t that great, Himegami?”

When he turned back toward her desk, her head was drooping down and she was muttering to herself.

“Nothing. There is nothing left. Nothing at all.”

(Did something bad happen to her?)

Suddenly, the bell rang.

“Oh, if we do not hurry, class will start. I have to go get the rumored transfer student. It looks like…Kamijou-chan has day duty today. Sorry, Kamijou-chan, but could you go to the library to get some materials I need for class?”

“Kgyaaaah!!”

Kamijou let out a scream at this demand for heavy labor, but then he stopped.

…

The library?

“So you *are* here.”

Kamijou Touma spoke dejectedly as soon as he set foot inside the school building’s first or second largest library.

Index, a silver-haired girl wearing white nun’s habit, sat at the checkout counter by the entrance.

“Mh. I’m the book manager character, so I’m the mysterious librarian today. Oh, and being mysterious means I know all about the legends of a grimoire hidden in the depths of the library, but I don’t know how to use that thing with buttons.”

“There are no such legends here. And ‘that thing with buttons’ is called a computer. And if you don’t know how to use it, you can’t check the list of books or who has checked out what. You have zero skill as a librarian, Index.”

“What are you talking about, Touma!? I just have to memorize the faces and names of the people who check out the books! And there are only 32,008 books

here, so I can easily memorize the bookshelves and see what's missing! Using the thing with the buttons is being lazy!!"

"…Well, I guess that memory of yours is mysterious." Kamijou let out a weary sigh. "But this isn't what a librarian character is supposed to be like. She's supposed to be a timid older girl. Y'know, with glasses and huge breasts. And she's always blushing because she isn't used to talking with guys, but she starts talking passionately when the topic of a book she likes comes up. And once she comes back to her senses, she blushes all the more! What I'm looking for is the shy, non-combatant, tolerant, reinforcing type! Just like that huge-breasted character in front of you who's sighing while reading a book of poetry that was popular from the 15th to 16th centuries!!"

"H-hu-huge? D-don't s-say that…"

Kazakiri Hyouka, a huge-breasted girl wearing glasses, a short-sleeved blouse, and a blue skirt, shrank down and almost began to cry. She also embraced her own shoulders to hide her body, but it only pressed her large breasts together even further.

Kamijou took a step back and compared the two girls.

"…Kazakiri's are about as big as Index's head, don't you think?"

With a look of shock, Index began swinging her arms around.

"Th-they're not…!"

"They are not that big! They…can't be! Stop…stop saying they are…huge…or as big as a head. …I-is it that much fun…to tease me!?"

At first, Index seemed surprised that Kazakiri was protesting so strongly, but she finally realized there were tears in the girl's eyes.

"I-it's okay, Hyouka. It isn't true. …Touma, you idiot! Here, I'll show you you're wrong! Look, look!!"

As she shouted, Index suddenly embraced Kazakiri who was sitting next to her. She pressed her cheek against Kazakiri's large breasts like a child burying her face in a soft cushion on a bed.

“Wahyah!?”

The sudden action made Kazakiri cry out.

“Look, Touma! They’re clearly smaller than my head!”

Kamijou’s thoughts silently froze solid.

Index did not understand the importance of the issue and he found himself unable to answer her questions. He transformed into a machine that could only nod its head.

However Index interpreted that, she seemed to grow a bit angry.

“Do you really like Hyouka that much? Are you saying she’s the better librarian!? Then I’ll give you what you want and show you my passion toward books like a true librarian! First, the Golden Bough! It was a wonderful experiment that tried to classify all the magic up until the 19th century into two categories, but there were of course exceptions! Trying to force everything to fit like that will lead to failure, so be careful!”

“…Ah!?”

With that, Kamijou finally recovered from his “confusion” status effect due to enough time passing.

“Um, Index? Telling me to be careful isn’t going to help much. No matter how much trivia you throw at me, I won’t really understand any of it. …And that isn’t how it should work. A librarian is supposed to give talks that even amateurs can understand and that draw out an interest in books. You’re supposed to sense both intelligence and kindness in her words.”

“Um, this is a library. I think you should try to be quieter…”

After Kamijou’s lecture and Kazakiri’s librarian-esque and reserved rebuke, Index’s confidence and pride had been smashed to pieces.

“U-uhh… But if you take books from me, I really have nothing left. If Hyouka takes the librarian spot, how am I supposed to live my life from now on?”

Index was so grief-stricken that Kamijou and Kazakiri began to feel guilty. They exchanged a glance and began thinking.

“Um… Uh… How about a character that is repeatedly learning and forgetting things?”

“I think a biting character would cover it pretty well.”

A vein popped out on Index’s temple.

She raised her head with a strange rumbling sound effect.

And she spoke.

“You’re fine with that?”

“What?”

“Touma, Touma. You’re fine with me living my life as a character that forgets all sorts of important things and bites you?”

“Eh!? Wait, Index, wait!! You can’t do that. Your bites are always major events! If you do that every day, every hour, every time, and every scene for no reason, it’ll lose all meaningaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhh!?”

The wild beast that had given up being a librarian climbed over the counter and attacked.

That boy had defeated Academy City’s strongest Level 5 with only a fist and stood before one of the world’s fewer than twenty Saints with no weapon whatsoever, but now he was helplessly knocked screaming to the ground.

With a girl’s tooth marks all over his body, Kamijou left the library while carrying quite a few books.

“Th-that explanation sounds a bit erotic, so why don’t I feel at all happy about it?”

As he walked unsteadily through the hallway, he heard hurried footsteps just

before turning a corner.

(Hm? These uncivilized footsteps… Mikoto, maybe? But she's in middle school. …No, wait! No one questioned Index or Kazakiri's presence, so I can't assume anything about this high school! She might be the character you run into while turning a corner! She even did almost exactly that on August 31!!)

Kamijou took a step or two back from the corner and prepared for the coming scene, but it was Komoe-sensei who appeared around the corner.

"Oh? Why are you in such a hurry, sensei?"

"I was looking for you! Honestly, how much time does it take to carry a few books!? I was worried something had happened! You need to focus on your task!"

Komoe-sensei took half of the books, told him to hurry back to the classroom, and staggered down the hall.

Kamijou sighed.

(Ah, I guess I was too worried. I was sure I would run into the transfer student or someone as I turned the corner. It makes sense. If Kamijou-san came installed with a functioning misfortune radar, he wouldn't run into so much misfortune.)

Just as Kamijou relaxed and started around the corner, he ran into someone who seemed to break through vectors of the laws of physics.

Before he could see what had hit him, Kamijou flew through the air and diagonally struck the wall at the end of a T-junction. The books remained to fall where he had left them. Without hitting the ground, Kamijou bounced off the wall and struck the opposite wall. His overall path resembled a sideways V. That wall happened to have a window and he crashed into the pillar-like area between windows before finally falling to the hallway floor. Even so, his momentum sent him rolling. His path had changed from a sideways V to something resembling Dengeki Bunko's lightning mark. His flight had been even more over-the-top than the Kazakiri pinball when she had been punched by Ellis in the underground mall.

As Kamijou continued to roll along the hallway, he spotted Accelerator sitting on

the floor after falling backwards.

This was Academy City's strongest Level 5.

This was the sole candidate for the Level 6 Shift who Kamijou had once fought in a train switchyard.

And he wore a short-sleeved sailor uniform that looked like a school's summer uniform.

And a miniskirt.

"Ow, ow, ow, ow," he said while sticking out his tongue.

A notebook and textbook fell out of his dropped bag. The name Suzushina Yuriko was written on them.

(Uuh…)

Kamijou finally stopped rolling.

"I don't want this! There's nothing good about this!! To be honest, I'm gonna vomit! This may be a standard and clichéd first step in a romance, but I can't even imagine how this would progress any further!! And what's with that obviously fake name!? Where did you get that sailor uniform!? Stop spreading your legs like this is a fan service scene! Don't mock me!!"

As he shouted, Academy City's strongest Level 5 remained collapsed in a sitting position.

"Apparently, I'm a character that suddenly appears without warning."

"I think you're a personification of the misfortune that always hangs around me."

"Also, I'm apparently a character that won't hate you at all no matter what you do to me."

"Like hell you are!! Do you think you're a delinquent girl who can't be honest with her feelings so she always abuses the harmless protagonist yet ultimately

knits him a hand-made sweater!?”

Kamijou began tearing at his head because he could no longer comprehend the whole character thing, but then someone else walked toward him.

It was a human wearing a green surgical gown who appeared masculine yet feminine, young yet aged, saintly yet sinful. Overall, he was an ambiguous person. He had a different type of silver hair than Index. His appeared to have lost all its color. That hair that extended down to his waist seemed to make it even harder to determine his age or sex.

His bare feet slapped against the floor as he approached.

“Why are you two not in class?”

“What? Who are you?”

“Well, it appears I am the board chairman character. I have serious doubts as to whether that qualifies as an entire category, but I must play the part as that is the part I was…ghbh!?”

Before the mysterious figure could finish speaking, Kamijou reflexively threw a punch.

“Gh..gbh… Wh-what are you doing?”

“I don’t really know, but I get the feeling it will solve everything on a global scale if I defeat you here.”

“P-please wait. I understand the desire to interfere with a secret character you never see on a daily basis. I do understand, but…bh!? But I must ask why you have so readily knocked me to the ground and climbed on top of…ghghgrbh.”

With the board chairman character defeated, Kamijou Touma wiped sweat from his brow with a gentle look on his face.

“Did that bring peace to the world?”

“What? So is this how you always do things?” asked Accelerator.

Kamijou was called to the faculty room because he had beaten up the board chairman.

As the boy hung his head, a female PE teacher wearing a green tracksuit laughed loudly.

“Ah hah hah hah! I completely understand how you feel, but you went a bit too far. Not letting the other person finish speaking isn’t like you, boy.”

The harmonious mood made it clear that board chairman was not popular with those who worked under him.

(But at any rate…)

Kamijou looked away from the tracksuit woman and turned toward one of the steel desks used by the teachers. A girl with a ponytail and strangely designed jeans sat at it. She was using an origami-sized piece of Japanese paper to slowly polish the blade of a sword.

“What are you doing here, Kanzaki?”

“I-I am not here because I want to be.” Kanzaki paused for a moment. “It seems I am a composed older character who helps you out and provides last-minute explanations. Apparently, that fit being a teacher. I would have felt more at home as a club president character, though”

“A club president? Not even in the senior year of high school are they that composed. And I don’t think I’ve ever seen anyone who would look more out of place in a girl’s uniform… No, wait. I just saw one. …A horrible one.”

“But I am only eighteen years old.”

“Allegedly.”

“No! Please do not ruin everything I just said!”

“No eighteen-year-old is like that! In fact, it kind of scares me! Will I be like that in another two years!? What is going to change inside me during that time!?”

“Perhaps you will finally grow out of weekly shounen manga.”

“Seriously!? I won’t want to know what happens next!?”

As Kamijou shouted in surprise, someone walked past him. He was a tall foreigner wearing a white suit and with his hair dyed green. The cover of the attendance book under his arm said “Homeroom Teacher – Aureolus Izzard”.

“Naturally, I too am eighteen. It appears there is no causal relationship between one’s actual age and one’s knowledge and titles.”

“That… That has to be wrong. I can’t imagine this middle-aged man spending his summer break having fun, forgetting to do his homework, and having Komoe-sensei get mad at him.”

“Obviously, I do not think anyone spends the summer of their senior year of high school doing nothing but have fun. It would seem my position is that of a mysterious character who researches and uses unknown techniques. That falls under the category of a ‘mysterious teacher with a secret past in some hidden world’ better than the category of student.”

“I really don’t think you’re qualified to teach.”

“Truly, I must ask what I lack in that regard.”

“I could see you using magic to force knowledge directly into the brains of students with bad grades! And you’d probably have your entire class form that something-or-other choir with a dead look in their eyes!”

“Is that all? Surprisingly, there is more to teaching than following the textbook. Yes, I may be well suited to teach at a cram school.”

“Someone who defeats the head of cram school and takes over the building is *not* suited for that!!”

As Kamijou held his head and let out a cry, he spotted a girl with wavy blonde hair. She wore a red cape and a restraining outfit made out of belts. She also wore fluttering and see-through innerwear-like clothing and had saws and hammers hanging at her waist.

“Hey, winged Russian. What’s your role? Are you the guardian angel of a mission school? You’ve gotta be something beyond a normal human.”

“My first answer: I am an English teacher.”

Misha Kreutzev’s eyes rolled about behind her bangs as she gave that simple answer.

In a way, her appearance would indeed trouble high school boys, but Kamijou was unsure what about her fit being a teacher.

Not to mention…

“English? …Aren’t you Russian?”

“My first question: can a Russian not become an English teacher?”

“What?”

“My first supplementary explanation: Japanese people can become English teachers. Someone from England or America would be praised. So why is it odd for a Russian to be an English teacher? Can I interpret this as racial discrimination?”

“Wait! Eh? This is a misunderstanding! I was just thinking you would teach Russian or college astronomy or something! I didn’t mean anything by it!”

“My second answer: if you are that insistent, I can introduce you to an English teacher who is Japanese. Hino Jinsaku-sensei, you can handle the rest.”

“Eh? Ehh!? Wait! You can’t call him here even as a joke! Uuh!? There’s a letter on this desk that just says ‘I am on my way’!!”

As Kamijou balled up the letter and pretended he had not seen it, a knock came at the faculty room door and it slid open.

“Excuse me.”

Shirai Kuroko entered. She had brown hair in twintails and she was a bit shorter than Misaka Mikoto. She wore the same summer uniform as Mikoto, so

descriptions of her appearance tended to lack detail.

Kamijou blinked a bit before speaking.

“I’m not sure how much longer I can keep asking questions with so many people showing up where they don’t belong, but why are you here?”

“I do not know. All I know is that I am an underclassmen character. I was given that part, so I must act accordingly. I can think up a reason later. I am a middle schooler in a high school, so even saying I am taking a school tour could work.”

Shirai’s explanation was extremely businesslike, but she suddenly froze in place.

“?”

Kamijou looked over and saw Kanzaki Kaori and the tracksuit-wearing Yomikawa Aiho chatting.

He turned back toward Shirai and saw that she was trembling.

“(Such a divine onee-sama aura! Basking in their light is the true desire of an underclassman character! …Ahh. No! Y-you mustn’t, Shirai Kuroko. You have only one onee-sama! Oh, but…uuh, ahh! Calm down, Shirai Kuroko! Picture your true onee-sama and calm down!!)”

As Shirai muttered to herself at length, she heard a familiar girl’s voice.

“Oh, there you are, says Misaka as she enters the faculty room.”

Misaka Imouto, who wore Tokiwadai Middle School’s summer uniform and had goggles on her forehead, stomped over toward Kamijou.

“O-o-o-onee-sama?”

Shirai was shocked at the sudden appearance of this goddess.

But then more and more identical girls entered the faculty room behind Misaka Imouto.

“It seems Misaka has finally found the Kamijou boy, says Misaka to make sure.” “Misaka has confirmed it.” “Misaka has confirmed it as well.” “All Misakas, it is

time for a roll call, announces Misaka." "Serial Number 10032." "Serial Number 10033." "Serial Number 10034." "10035 is here too." "10036 is present." "10037 is doing fine."

This many Misakas proved too much happiness for Shirai to handle.

An abnormal smile appeared on the twintailed girl's face and she slowly collapsed backwards.

"S-so many…onee-samas… Wh-what is with this abnormally high onee-sama density?"

As Kuroko twitched in ecstasy, Kamijou awkwardly looked away.

"Um, I don't think the 'onee-sama' you're talking about is here."

He turned back toward the Sisters. The girls with goggles on their foreheads did resemble Mikoto quite a bit, but they were not actually Misaka Mikoto. He did have a feeling he saw one girl without goggles somewhere toward the back, though.

"I'm right over here! Huh? Ah! I can't break through this wall of Sisters!"

Kamijou thought he heard a voice coming from the crowd, but he saw nothing but the same face when he looked in that direction.

After English class with a Russian wearing restraints and history class with an Italian who used a unique teaching style, lunchtime finally arrived.

Kamijou staggered to the cafeteria, spotted an army of Sisters filling up all of the seats, averted his gaze wearily, and spotted a girl in a maid outfit working busily behind the counter. It was Tsuchimikado Maika.

"I'm not even going to ask why you're here. Your presence is relatively peaceful."

"There really isn't a place for a maid here, so my only chance for an appearance was to make a connection between my apron and the cafeteria."

“Yeah, you’d never see a maid at school.”

“They’re a common sight at Tokiwadai Middle School.”

“Damn that Biri Biri…”

Hearing about that nouveau riche school life caused a dark flame to burn within petit bourgeois Kamijou Touma.

He received a bowl of salt ramen from Maika and turned toward the cafeteria.

It was lunchtime, so it was naturally crowded. However, the crowd was made up entirely of identical Misaka faces. They were all eating the tonkatsu meal with identical motions, so the sight went beyond surreal and reached bizarre.

He walked through the cafeteria of identical people and sat across from *Misaka Mikoto*.

Mikoto looked a bit surprised.

“This may be odd coming from me, but how could you tell I was the real one so easily?”

“If you actually look, it isn’t that hard.”

Kamijou’s response was completely casual, but Mikoto blushed a bit. Kamijou split his chopsticks and continued speaking.

“After all, you’re the only one eating something weird.”

“It is not weird! I’m just eating ratatouille! And what was that budding within me just now? Give me back that throbbing of my heart!!”

“I can’t even imagine what language or region ratatouille is from.”

“Hey! Are you so focused on the food that you can’t see me!?”

“They’d never have something that rare in our cafeteria. Is this the Maika effect? Not bad, Maika.”

Kamijou turned toward the counter and saw the maid girl spinning pizza dough

on her index finger. Having been driven outside Kamijou's visual spotlight, Mikoto covered her face with her hands and began to sob.

"U-uuh… What kind of character do you think I am?"

"What? Do I really have to classify you like that? Well, maybe you're one of those characters with bangs too long to see the eyes."

"I'm a faceless background character!? Damn. And the Sisters have the relatively important position of a little sister character."

As Mikoto complained about her position in life, someone spoke up from the side.

"That's right, that's right. Misaka is a little sister character too, says Misaka as Misaka waves her arms around and takes advantage of the situation."

"?"

Kamijou and Mikoto turned toward the voice.

They saw a girl with almost the exact same face as Mikoto or Misaka Imouto, but she appeared to be about ten, she was about a head shorter than Mikoto, and she was naked except for a single light blue blanket.

"Even among all the little sister characters, Misaka has the distinction of being the ultimate loli character, says Misaka as Misaka makes her announcement. Misaka looks ten and is actually zero years old. If you're into this kind of inexcusable body, then look all you want, says Misaka as Misaka proudly puffs her chest out."

"I see…"

Kamijou and Mikoto exchanged a glance.

"Who are you?" they asked in unison.

The little girl's shoulder's jumped in surprise.

"W-w-wahhhhh! Come to think of it, this is the first time you have seen Misaka,

says Misaka as Misaka gives her final comment before running away.”

Kamijou watched as the mysterious blanket girl covered her face with her hands and ran off, but he finally turned back toward Mikoto as if nothing had happened.

“The Sisters are little sister characters due to that name, so maybe you should’ve had the character for little sister in your name.”

“Then I would have to bear that cross even after I turned forty or fifty.” Mikoto sighed. “Everyone’s been going on about characters today. What has happened to Academy City? Even Tokiwadai is filled with a strange atmosphere. Roses are blooming all over the place for no reason and there are tea parties, ringlet curls, and ‘oh ho ho’ laughter everywhere.”

“Isn’t Tokiwadai always like that?”

“What kind of place do you think my school is?” Mikoto sank wearily down. “Ahh, it’s due to some ‘rules’ that Academy City is messed up, right? Kuroko embraced me first thing in the morning. She claimed she had no choice, but I still knocked her away with my pillow. What kind of rule makes someone suddenly hug you with a giant smile on their face?”

Kamijou tilted his head.

He had a feeling Himegami had said something about that in the morning, but he did not remember the details because he had not taken notes.

He tried to remember what she had said about the rules.

“I think it was something about a letter in my shoe locker after school. And the instant I read it, this strange everyday life will end. Himegami said I would live a life free of any troubles if I didn’t get a single letter.”

“From what I heard, a rule says all but the most suitable letter will vanish if multiple are placed inside. In other words, you can’t complete multiple routes at once. Also, letters from guys don’t count.”

Mikoto’s explanation used some technical words, so it was difficult to understand.

(I think Himegami said something about entering the route of the person who sends me the letter and being stuck there until the ending.)

“But I don’t really see a causal relationship between that letter and the characters.”

“Hm. I don’t think the letter is what is producing the characters. In fact, any kind of ending should work.”

“?”

“*What matters is that you bring it to an end.* The center of the change is not the letter. It’s us, the humans. Some kind of rule or trick is amplifying the characterization that creates clichéd thoughts, actions, and situations. The group that has been twisted wants a clichéd ending from a clichéd person. That will return us to our normal lives. So the actual method of ending does not matter. Instead of the letter, you could have someone secretly confess their love to you behind the school building, you could defeat a giant monster, or you could have a sunset fistfight on an embankment. You just need something that marks a clear ending. But given the people here, the letter would probably cause the least damage to the surroundings.”

(Not good.)

Miss Misaka Mikoto was beginning to break after getting too heated up.

“At any rate, this is annoying, so could you hurry up and end it?”

“Ah, Kamijou-san can feel tears welling up after finally meeting someone who sees this the same way.”

“Has this been that bad? By the way, I’m stuck being a high class girl character, but that isn’t happening. Sometimes I have no idea how to even put on those frilly dresses. And while I can play piano or do ballroom dancing, I’m not proud of the fact and I don’t look down on people who can’t. I want to read manga just like everyone else and canned tea is just fine.”

“Y-you’re normal. The normal world has finally returned to me!”

Kamijou trembled with joy.

“What are you so overjoyed about?” Mikoto sighed. “All of that is just an inaccurate stereotype. You can just have a specialized staff member put the dress on you and you can have a maid bring you the tea. You may wear pretty things and eat delicious things, but you never need to use your own hands. There are people to choose for you and bring it to you. Why even pay people who force you to exhaust your brain by having you think about it?”

“…That settles it. You’re definitely a sheltered rich girl!!”

Kamijou Touma felt the same as a traveler who thought he had finally found someone who spoke his language but was actually a con artist who targeted tourists.

“Eh!? Why? You’d be worried if a taxi driver hesitantly asked you which was the gas and which was the brake, right?”

“Middle schoolers don’t use taxis that often! I’m starting to think you’ll say ‘let them eat cake’!”

“???”

Mikoto stared at Kamijou in confusion.

“Anyway, we’ve been talking about characters, but what kind of character are you?”

“What?” Kamijou thought about it for a bit. “Hm. A misfortune character, I guess?”

“Misfortune?” One of Mikoto’s eyebrows shot up. “Misfortune!?”

“Ee!?”

Her sudden shout almost made Kamijou jump back, but she quickly began to point around her at the many Sisters eating their tonkatsu meals.

“I don’t see any misfortune around here!! You oblivious lucky bastard! You know just under 10,000 girls (i-in an incredibly favorable way), so don’t give me this misfortune crap! Honestly, honestly, honestly, honestly! You raise flags and then just leave them! If you raise the flag, do something about it!!”

“That’s right, stupid Touma!”

Index entered the cafeteria as if responding to Mikoto’s shout.

“You’re always like that, Touma! You get to know everyone around you yet don’t advance any further. But you don’t give up on those girls either! You just hold on to them! And what’s this about 10,000!? That’s the same as a small city-state’s population!!”

Hearing the commotion, Komoe-sensei and Himegami Aisa arrived.

“Ten thousand? Heh. You mustn’t underestimate the legend of Kamijou-chan, sister-chan. How many stories do you think he had created before he met you? Heh heh heh. Eh heh heh heh.”

“He will destroy the illusions of that girl’s virginity with the fingers of his right hand.”

The black-haired girl’s deadpan comment caught the ear of Yomikawa and Kanzaki as they passed by.

“Oh, are you saying I’m destined to eventually gain a taste for younger guys?”

“At the very least, he was not able to win over the archangel of the back.”

The sword-wielding girl’s words produced a response from Misha who was no longer even trying to hide the wings growing from her back.

“My first answer: I technically have no ego, so that would be impossible. However, it is possible that an abnormal situation like before could cause an error in the standard values for my actions and create something similar to an ego. His right hand possesses enough destructive power for that, so I cannot let my guard down.”

Glasses-wearing Kazakiri Hyouka timidly spoke up.

“And he has no problem with someone who isn’t human…”

All of the Sisters looked up from their tonkatsu meals.

“He also does not seem to mind if you are artificial, adds Misaka.”

Shirai Kuroko stomped into the cafeteria with her hands on her hips.

“That’s right. That’s right. Onee-sama, you have gotten too close to this gentleman. You need to put some distance between you. And perhaps you can come closer to me? …Bgah!? Th-the cafeteria is filled with onee-samas…”

As Shirai Kuroko collapsed to the ground while bleeding from the nose, she almost crushed a girl covering herself with a light blue blanket.

“Y-you are too heavy, says Misaka as Misaka sends out a warning message. Misaka wants to make a comment too and Misaka wants an equal chance to give her opinion, so why will no one listen to her? wails Misaka as Misaka struggles underneath this girl who is covered in blood.”

The blanket girl said something, but everyone exchanged a glance and gave heartless comments of “Who’s that?”, “Who is that, Touma?”, and “This is technically the first time Misaka has seen her, answers Misaka as she places her tonkatsu on top of rice.” Meanwhile, Shirai Kuroko twitched happily on the floor while saying, “O-onee-sama has shrunk down.”

After all of the gathered girls exchanged a glance, they finally all focused on a single point.

“So what kind of character are you, Touma?” “I think all these flags should make that obvious.” “You may think all of the Misakas count as a single flag, but that will not cut it, comments Misaka with 10,000 voices.” “Misaka is one of those, but no one will pay any attention to her, says Misaka as Misaka is driven to the edge of despair.” “Heh. Eh heh heh. I, Kuroko, will give you so much attention you will lose track of time.” “Y’know, if you put some work into it, my route might be a possibility.” “Come to think of it, maid-chan, your flag isn’t waving much despite how often you’re with Kamijou-chan.” “Oh, are you saying your flag is waving, Tsukuyomi-sensei?” “Um, we can…start as friends…” “My first question: before we discuss whether this is a malfunction due to Angel Fall, may I punish you in the name of Gabriel for the sin of lust?” “I agree with you there, but his idiocy is too much to fix by hitting him. In fact, hitting him can make him even stronger and more determined.” “Oh, my. Oh, my. Oh, my. Your mother is here to make a quick appearance in the chaos.” “Then I’m gonna slip in to tease nii-chan. It’s me, Otohime. Let’s go play!” “…I wasn’t able to say

anything.”

The deluge of voices from all directions approached the limits of Kamijou’s mental processing power.

His eyes started spinning around in his head.

“W-w-wahh!? I give, I give! Not even Prince Shoutoku could follow this many simultaneous conversations! In the end, what is it you all want to say!?”

Everyone there stared at Kamijou.

The focus sent a chill down that high school boy’s spine.

The nun and the girl with around 10,000 clones spoke in unison to represent the group.

“Are you sure you’re not the character that never chooses and loses everything?”

The school day finally came to an end.

Kamijou Touma had made it through art class with Sherry-sensei who was focused on making avant-garde art from a collection of trash, he had seen Tsuchimikado who was holding his head in his hands after working hard behind the scenes but achieving nothing, and he had met the frog-faced school doctor who had asked, “Disappointed I’m not a beautiful woman?” After cleaning up the home economics room and arriving in the empty school entranceway, he hesitantly opened his shoe locker and peeked inside.

It was there.

He saw an envelope.

Rather than a vertically-oriented manila envelope, it was a horizontally-oriented white envelope from a Western letter set. It was sealed with a red sticker and that was the only color on it.

According to the rules, this letter would bring an end to the school life he had

lived today.

They also said this was a special day that would greatly influence his life, *so the sender of this letter was heavily related to the rest of his life.*

It was something like an absolute love letter that could not be rejected or questioned.

“Who is it from?”

Kamijou glanced around before picking up the envelope. It was so smooth that he questioned whether it was really paper. He did not know any of the brand names in the letter set industry, but he could guess this was high quality. He did not know if the paper had smelled that way to begin with or if someone had sprayed perfume on it for effect, but it had a faint sweet aroma to it. Everything about it seemed high quality.

The sender’s name was not given on the front or back.

“…”

Deciding to open it, he brought his fingers to the red sticker, but then he hesitated. It felt the same as touching an item in a glass case at a museum. He brought his index finger up and down across the red sticker a few different times to gradually peel it up with his fingernail.

The sticker made no noise as it was peeled off.

Such a sound would have been too unrefined for it.

It may have used a special adhesive like a sticky note. The sticker made no noise and it left no trace behind. It carefully peeled away like a silk garment slipping from a girl’s shoulder.

As Kamijou stuck his hand in the envelope, he realized his fingertips were trembling. He could not grab the paper before his eyes. After two or three failures, he finally pulled out the letter.

It was only one page.

The light pastel paper was folded into three. Unfolding it made Kamijou nervous.

It said the following:

“Dear Kamijou Touma-sama.”

“Sama!?”

He jumped in meaningless surprise and continued to read through the letter. As he did, he pictured the faces and names of those who might have sent it.

“Please forgive the suddenness of this missive. I could not restrain myself any longer and simply had to express my feelings to you.”

(Index?)

“I am fully aware of the special rules covering Academy City. My intentions fall in line with those very rules.”

(Himegami Aisa, Misaka Mikoto, Misaka Imouto, Kanzaki Kaori, Misha, Accelerat-…no, wait. Delete that last one. Shirai Kuroko, Tsuchimikado Maika, Kazakiri Hyouka, Tsukuyomi Komoe, Yomikawa Aiho, that strange blanket girl.)

“According to the aforementioned rules, all but the true letter will vanish if you receive more than one. I hope that my letter will not vanish and I am praying that my hope will reach you.”

(Who is it? The writing is very polite. The high quality envelope bothers me too. But she might speak and write differently and the envelope might have been a one-time splurge. …Still, the fact that she used a letter instead of email might be a hint.)

“I love you.”

(Who? Who!? Who!!?)

“I merely wish you will receive my words with happiness. Love, ●●●●●●●.”

“Huh?”

The end of the letter made Kamijou tilt his head.

What had likely been the sender’s name had been blotted out with a pen.

The identity of the sender remained a mystery.

(No. Not after coming this far. Wait, wait, wait, wait. Kamijou-san will not let you leave something so major unresolved! Damn, isn’t there any way of reading the name!? And what good is it to get embarrassed here!? Is this some new technique for teasing a guy!?)

Kamijou tried flipping the letter over, tracing his finger across it, and some other things. Once he held it up to the fluorescent light above, he could just barely make out the writing. The name had been written while pressing down hard and then it had been more lightly crossed out, so the writing left an indentation in the paper.

He read the first small, cutesy letter hidden below the ink.

“I”

“I!?”

He only knew one person who’s name began with I.

Without realizing it, Kamijou brought his face closer and closer to the letter.

“Innocentius.”

In an instant, Kamijou Touma threw the letter and envelope to the ground.

Blood vessels bulged out all across his face like a cantaloupe.

A dangerous light entered his eyes.

“That goddamn prieeeeeeeeeeeessssssssssssssssssttttttttttttttttttt!! Why didn’t you catch on from the moment the envelope *smelled of perfume*, Kamijou Touma!?”

A waterfall of bitter tears flowed from the pure boy’s eyes and his scream

resounded throughout the evening school building.

He then heard the sound of a burning flame giant behind him.

The rules had said a letter from a guy would not count.

But that did not help with a mass of flames that had no gender and was not even alive. The rules came to an end without actually deciding whether that counted or not.

“You understand, don’t you?”

As he listened to the bloodcurdling scream, the Anglican priest leaning against the school building’s wall lightly shut one eye.

“I’m not mature enough to sit idly by when I see something like this.”

He held *multiple envelopes*.

He had not checked inside them, but they likely held people’s true desires without a single joke.

Stiyl began walking toward Kamijou Touma’s classroom while the envelopes were on the verge of vanishing due to the rules. According to the rules, the letters *would not vanish* if they were put somewhere other than Kamijou’s shoe locker. If Stiyl stuck them in the boy’s desk, Kamijou would eventually notice them.

The young priest took on what was clearly the losing role.

He did not realize it himself, but he almost seemed to be enjoying himself.